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CHAPTER:		
	CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY  Approved by: Signature of Agency Director	PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
EFFECTIVE DATE: March 11, 2011	LATEST REVISION: March 11, 2011	REVIEW BY LEGAL COUNSEL: March 11, 2011

I. AUTHORITY	The Director of the Child and Family Services Agency (“CFSA” or “Agency”) adopts this policy to be consistent with the Agency’s mission and applicable federal and District of Columbia laws, rules, and regulations, including but not limited to the Child Abuse and Prevention Treatment Act of 1974, Public Law 93-247, 42 USC § 5101, and its implementing regulations; the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, Public Law 110-351 (codified in scattered sections of 42 USC); Title 4 of the DC Code; provisions in Title 29 of the DC Municipal Regulations (DCMR); and the Modified Final Order and the Amended Implementation Plan in <i>LaShawn A. v. Gray</i> .
II. APPLICABILITY	All CFSA staff and contracted agency personnel.
III. RATIONALE	CFSA is legally and professionally obligated to support safety, permanency, and well-being for the District’s children and families. When imminently dangerous circumstances require a child’s unavoidable removal from the home, CFSA will make every effort to assist the child’s biological parents or caregivers to address the underlying issues that led to the removal, and/or to reduce any currently existing risks that might prevent reunification. In the event a child’s case planning team determines that reunification is contraindicated to the child’s safety and well-being needs, CFSA shall concurrently plan for one of two secondary permanency options: adoption or guardianship (preferably by kin, see CFSA’s Permanency Planning Policy). If neither of these options is viable, the Agency will pursue legal custody or an alternative planned permanent living arrangement (APPLA). In either case, the Agency is committed to helping the child to establish an enduring, mutually agreed-upon, lifelong connection with at least one mature adult who is committed to the child or youth. In order to facilitate the achievement of the preceding permanency options, social workers require concise and detailed written procedures. The procedures in this policy meet the goals of the Agency’s mission and Practice Model , including the importance of teaming amongst internal and external professionals, as well as teaming with individuals who have a significant relationship to the child. This policy also fulfills the Agency’s commitment to exemplary child welfare practice standards for out-of-home care in the District of Columbia.

IV. POLICY	<p>It is CFSA's policy to provide a child-centered, family-focused, community-connected, strength-based and solution-focused service array through the implementation of core practice values.* It is also the Agency's policy to approach a child's well-being with conscientious consideration of the child's position within the family as a whole. Accordingly, CFSA is committed to teaming with and providing assistance to the entire family with a focus on permanency, cultural competency, and quality services. CFSA policy further mandates that removal of a child from his or her family home should be avoided unless it is determined that the child cannot safely remain at home. When removal is necessary, the child is placed in out-of-home care. Specific guidance for ensuring the best placement for the child, and an expedient path to permanency is available to the assigned out-of-home social worker through this Out-of-Home Services policy. The procedures outlined herein direct social workers how to guide children and families through the out-of-home experience, including but not limited to case planning, placement, visitation, provision of out-of-home services, and the ultimate assurance of a positive permanency outcome. <i>Note: throughout this policy, any usage of the terms "child" or "children" is inclusive of older youth according to context. The term "caregiver" includes parents, guardians, and custodians.</i></p> <p><i>*For specific procedures, and more detailed descriptions of the core practice values and philosophical underpinnings of the Agency's approach to children who receive out-of-home care, please refer to the CFSA Out-of-Home Practice Model.</i></p>
V. CONTENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Engagement B. Teaming C. Assessment D. Case Planning E. Placement F. Visitation G. Permanency H. Court Involvement I. Supervision
VI. ATTACHMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Definitions B. Placement Passport (Template)
VII. PROCEDURES	<p>Procedure A: Engagement</p> <p>Family engagement (<i>see Appendix A: Definitions</i>) is a central CFSA practice standard that all out-of-home and private agency social workers shall incorporate as part of their case management responsibilities. Although strategies for engagement of the family may differ depending on the permanency goal and the length of time a case has been opened, successful engagement will very often generate trust and empower every family member to willingly participate in case planning to ensure that every child has a permanent family in a timely manner. Social workers and other professional team members must use clinical judgment when determining whether it is appropriate to engage or re-engage family members.</p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Depending on the circumstances of each case, the “family” shall be defined as a unit consisting of the children, biological parents, any other individuals identified by the children and/or parents, as well as kinship and resource parents. 2. The assigned out-of-home or private agency social worker (henceforth “the social worker”) shall demonstrate the following attitudes throughout the life of a case in order to establish a successful and ongoing family engagement process: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Respect for each family member, including extended family members and non-residential or incarcerated parents, and the individual roles they play within the family unit. b. Authentic communication with honest expression and sincere attention to what each family member has to say, including appropriate expression of negative feelings (anger, mistrust, etc.). c. Empathy, understanding, and compassion for individual viewpoints, perceptions, and experiences, including empathic understanding of the child and/or parent’s emotional and psychological state. d. Cultural sensitivity and awareness. e. All social workers shall comply with the guidelines set forth in the Agency’s Language Access Services Policy, and thereby ensure that any or all family members with limited English proficiency (LEP) are provided with access to appropriate interpretation and/or translation services, including American Sign Language (ASL) services as needed. 3. As outlined and detailed in the Out-of-Home Practice Model, the social worker shall also integrate the following four basic components of a successful engagement process into their daily practice: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Transparent Communication: age-appropriate children and family members are informed of their rights and choices upfront, in addition to being given clear expectations about steps that CFSA and the family need to take for achieving the child’s permanency goal. b. Professionalism: social workers approach families without biases, and all interactions are respectful of diversity, including cultural values and belief systems. c. Building Trust: every age-appropriate child and family member is encouraged to communicate honestly and openly as the social worker poses open-ended questions and incorporates active-listening skills. d. Empowerment: social workers role model strength-based behavior and parenting skills; case management focuses on coaching and promoting self-advocacy, and encourages involvement of other family members or individuals important to the child and family. 4. Every effort possible should be made to establish a positive rapport at first contact with the child, parent, or caregiver. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Immediately after a removal, the social worker shall carefully and respectfully communicate with the family.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. After the ongoing social worker is assigned (within 5 days of removal), the social worker shall distinguish and clarify his or her role from the role of the Child Protective Services (CPS) investigative social worker. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The social worker shall explain to the family that the out-of-home focus is on helping the family to reunify. ii. The CPS social worker's responsibilities are outlined extensively in CFSA's Investigations Policy. Some of these include but are not limited to the following activities during the transition period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Arranging for medical or medico-legal screenings within 24-hours of removal. b) Teaming with CFSA's Placement Services Administration (PSA) to ensure a licensed placement that best protects the child's safety and well-being, and to promote an expedient permanency outcome. c) Participating in Family Team Meetings within the first 30-days of removal. d) Completing all court-related tasks within the first 30-days of removal. iii. Within 30 days of the removal, the CPS and the ongoing social worker shall team together, using reasonable efforts, to locate any absentee parents, other legal caregivers, maternal and paternal grandparents, and/or other individuals with a close, important relationship to the child. These individuals shall be encouraged to attend all court hearings and/or team meetings. iv. If at any time there are concerns on the part of the out-of-home or private agency social worker regarding roles and responsibilities, these should be addressed in a timely fashion with their assigned supervisor. c. The legal aspects of removal, including the disposition decision, shall be openly explained in plain, everyday language. Questions should be encouraged and answered as best as possible. d. Family members should be helped to recognize their own strengths, and to acknowledge their own natural resilience for overcoming the circumstances that led to the removal. e. All immediate needs should be identified and addressed as soon as possible, e.g., proper food supply, working utilities, clothing, etc. <p>5. Engagement shall extend to non-offending and/or absentee parents who have not been the child's primary caregiver.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If parents have not been involved in the child's life, or if the parent is incarcerated, the social worker shall still make reasonable efforts to reach out to these parents on a monthly basis and to make every effort to engage them when appropriate as team members in case planning and decision-making procedures. <i>Note: The family's team is defined below in Procedures B: Teaming.</i> b. When contact information is unknown, the social worker shall follow the procedures outlined in the Agency's Diligent Search Policy.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. If contact information is known but the parent is unresponsive, the social worker should contact the parent's attorney (if known) in order to facilitate the engagement process. The social worker shall also send a certified letter to the address on file. If necessary, the social worker should consult with his or her supervisor. <p>6. When engaging parents, including absentee or non-offending parents, the social worker shall adhere to the following procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update all relevant contact information in FACES. b. Consult with a supervisor, if necessary, to plan the initial contact. c. When contact is made, assess whether participation in team meetings is appropriate and if so, help prepare the parent for the team meeting as well as provide the location and time of the next scheduled meeting to the parent. d. Assess whether supportive services will help facilitate rebuilding the parent/child relationship and whether such services will also assist in the effort towards reunification, if appropriate. <i>Note: the social worker shall consider it an integral responsibility of his or her duties to support birth parents and assist them to get the services needed to work towards reunification.</i> e. Assess whether visitation is appropriate and under what conditions. If so, take appropriate actions to prepare parent and child for visitation, ensuring that the visitation occurs in as normal a context and environment as possible. <p>7. Every social worker should be prepared to address some degree of resistance to engagement from family members in the early stages of removal and entry of a child into foster care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Whenever social workers are faced with challenges during the engagement process, it is especially important that they reach out to their supervisors for guidance and support. b. Social workers shall continue monthly efforts to reach out to family members, including extended family members (as identified by the child or his or her parents).
	<p>Procedure B: Teaming</p> <p>Teaming is the overarching practice component through which CFSA and its contracted agency partners make decisions that protect and ensure safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families. A central principle of effective teaming for out-of-home care is the inclusion of family and children (when age appropriate) in both case planning and decision-making activities. Teaming with the family also provides the social worker with the most advantageous opportunities for applying well-informed and creative approaches to achieving permanency. Although a meeting among a child's team may be referenced in this policy as a "team meeting", it is not to be confused with the formal Family Team Meeting (FTM), which is facilitated through CFSA's Office of Clinical Practice Family Team Meeting Unit (<i>for more information, see the Family Team Meeting Policy</i>). A case-carrying social worker may schedule and facilitate meetings for a child's support team throughout the life of a case, including meetings for case planning and discussing permanency goals.</p>

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	<p><i>Note: this policy focuses on teaming specifically as it relates to the out-of-home social worker's responsibility for helping to establish a child's support team, facilitate ongoing teaming activities, and promote family participation in out-of-home case planning. It should be understood that the basic principles of teaming carry a much broader interpretation, including the teaming relationships that exist between front-line staff and management or between CFSA employees and other District or community agencies, etc. For more information on the principles of teaming, please refer to Attachment A, Definitions, Principles of Teaming.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The CFSA or private agency social worker shall be responsible for scheduling a team meeting within 30 days of the child's removal or within the date a petition was filed in Family Court, whichever occurs sooner. 2. Throughout the life of an out-of-home case, team participation shall include but not be limited to the following persons: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The child (when age appropriate) b. Custodial, non-offending, and absentee parents (if known) c. Attorneys for parents (if known and applicable) d. Extended family members (as identified by the child and his or her parents) e. Social workers f. Resource parents (i.e., kinship, pre-adoptive, and foster parents) (For more guidance on teaming with resource parents, see CFSA's policy, Relationship with Resource Parents.) g. Guardians <i>ad litem</i> (GAL) h. Key service providers (e.g., therapist, community-based intervention representative, provider case manager) i. Other professional or informal supports, e.g., school staff, private tutor, family friends, etc. j. Representatives from other CFSA administrations, e.g., Child Protective Services (CPS), the Family Team Meeting Unit (FTM), Office of the Attorney General (OAG), Office of Clinical Practice (OCP), etc. <p><i>Note: An effective team composition develops over time in accordance with the evolving needs of the child and the family. It is expected that the team will give ongoing consideration to its own composition and decide which individuals in a child's life shall be appropriate or inappropriate to participate. Older youth shall have an especially strong voice in selecting participants when planning their permanency goals.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Subsequent to the initial FTM, which shall be held prior to a child being removed from the home (whenever possible, unless there are extenuating circumstances - see CFSA's Family Team Meeting Policy), the scheduling of all future team meetings shall be the responsibility of the social worker. <i>Note: other team members, including parents and resources parents, may request a meeting through the social worker.</i>
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Unless there is a documented legal or clinical determination that a family member's participation is inappropriate, family members shall be invited to team meetings, even if they have not been recently involved in the child's life. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The social worker shall consult with the supervisor to determine if safety parameters are required for an individual family member's (or other caregiver) participation in the scheduled meetings. ii. Both the social worker and the supervisor shall consider any history or future risk of physical or emotional harm to the child. b. Other meeting participants shall be determined in accordance with the meeting's purpose. <p>4. In addition to scheduling team meetings, the social worker shall be responsible for the following team meeting activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Functioning as the primary facilitator for each team meeting. b. Soliciting and encouraging all family members to be active participants in decision-making and case planning procedures. c. Facilitating development of action items for all team members, including timelines and a series of steps that identify and acknowledge completion of those items. d. Entering all contact information and case plan updates into FACES.net. e. Sending written notification of the next meeting's date, time, location, and purpose to all anticipated team participants. f. Coordinating, as appropriate, the various Agency participants to ensure accountability of CFSA responsibilities to child and family. g. Ensuring that updates are provided to team members whenever changes or developments occur between these formal meetings. <p>5. Throughout the life of the case, selection of new team participants shall be based on the requests and opinions of age-appropriate children and adult family members.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The social worker shall initially solicit from the family the names and contact information of persons whom the family trusts and/or would consider beneficial for building a strong, productive, and lasting team. b. Older youth shall be encouraged to identify adults of importance with whom they feel comfortable and confident for participation on their team, including immediate case and post-permanency planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The social worker shall ensure that individuals of importance are able to provide a loving and supportive relationship, unconditional commitment, and guided supervision, particularly during an older youth's transition to self-sufficiency.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. When appropriate, the family member shall introduce the proposed team member to the social worker, either in person or by telephone or email. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The social worker shall engage new team members in the same manner as outlined under <i>Procedure B: Engagement</i>. ii. Team members shall be encouraged to participate in discussions. <p>6. Social workers shall encourage a teaming <u>and supportive</u> relationship between the resource parent(s) and the biological parents (if applicable).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pertinent information about the birth family's circumstances shall be shared with the resource parent in order to facilitate the resource parent's ability to serve the needs of the child. b. The social worker shall encourage the resource parent to support the parent while demonstrating consistently positive behavior and strength-based parenting skills. c. Resource parents shall be coached to reinforce the importance of maintaining family bonds, including the importance of phone calls and visits between the child and family in preparation for reunification. d. Social workers shall ensure their availability to resource parents should there be any concerns or conflicts related to contacts with birth parents; and shall serve in a non-polarizing and clinical manner to address and/or resolve such concerns whenever possible. <p>7. The social worker is responsible for encouraging and empowering team decision-making as the ideal and preferred approach for determining services and establishing case plans, goals, and family objectives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Decisions that relate to the development or revision of goals shall be integrated, not conflict with goals established by other District or community-based agencies (e.g., individual education plans, or case plans connected to a mental health provider, etc.). b. If a team decision is not fully accepted by consensus, despite the team's best efforts at collective decision-making, the social worker shall consult his or her chain of command for resolution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. If necessary, the social worker's management team shall claim <u>CFSA's</u> authority as final arbiter and reinforce the right of the Agency to make unilateral decisions <i>when clinically determined by the appropriate management staff person to be in the best interest of the child</i>. ii. The social worker shall present the final decision to the team and explain the Agency's rationale in clear, everyday language. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Every effort shall be made to assist team members to move forward after the final decision is presented. b) The social worker shall reinforce the integrity of the team after presenting the final decision.
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	<p>c) The social worker shall also inform team participants that the CFSA Ombudsman is available for consultation if there is ongoing dissension or, if applicable according to CFSA policy, that an Agency decisions may be appealed through the Fair Hearing process (see the Fair Hearings policy).</p> <p>c. The social worker shall be responsible for coordinating implementation of all team decisions, and for ensuring that the appropriate parties fulfill their individual obligations.</p> <p>8. Although the social worker is expected to lead every team meeting, certain occasions may arise when it is appropriate for another team member to function as a co-leader or co-facilitator.</p> <p>a. Whenever possible, co-leaders should include a family member, resource parent, or an individual who has been selected by the child, i.e., someone with whom the child has established a lifelong connection (particularly for older youth nearing permanency).</p> <p>b. When a team meeting is integrated with an FTM or a Structured Progress Review (SPR)* the appropriate FTM facilitator or SPR specialist shall take the lead.</p> <p>c. Regardless of who co-facilitates a team meeting, the social worker shall always maintain primary responsibility for the direction and management of the case.</p> <p><i>*The current SPR process is a strengthened version of the former Administrative Review process. For more information, see "Current Initiatives", p. 18, CFSA's 2010 Resource Development Plan.</i></p> <p>9. Whenever a team meeting is scheduled specifically to discuss permanency, the social worker shall consider the following factors.</p> <p>a. The Family Court determines a child's permanency goal (including any goal changes) based on the team's permanency recommendation, and the presentations of the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), and all other parties and attorneys.</p> <p>i. It is imperative that the AAG be present and fully involved in any team meeting that is scheduled to discuss permanency.</p> <p>ii. Participation by the GAL and parents' attorneys should be strongly encouraged.</p> <p>iii. If a judge makes a decision regarding permanency that is contrary to the team's recommendation, the social worker shall consult with the AAG to discuss options.</p> <p>b. Turnover of a team's membership shall not disrupt the integrity of a team's decision-making processes nor in any way prevent or delay any child's progress towards permanency.</p> <p>i. Prior to a planned exit from the Agency, a social worker is responsible for ensuring that all case documentation clearly outlines the team's decisions regarding future action items.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. In the event that circumstances preclude the social worker's ability to update case documentation prior to his or her departure, the assigned supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring that the team's decisions and any related action items (including "next steps") are documented and updated. iii. Whenever possible and/or practical, the Agency shall be responsible for upholding commitments made to the family by a social worker prior to leaving the Agency <p>c. Team meeting discussions regarding permanency planning for older youth must include the following agenda items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lifelong connections ii. Knowledge of self care, including general health, health care insurance and health care power of attorney and/or proxy iii. Employment or educational plan, including selection of vocation and/or post-secondary educational opportunities iv. Financial management, including knowledge of leasing, tenant rights and rental/home owners insurance v. Safe, affordable housing options vi. Responsibility to self and others vii. Ability to be self-sustaining after exiting the child welfare system <p>10. The social worker shall team directly with the AAG to prepare for court testimony and/or whenever there are any problems or concerns with the drafting of a court report. (<i>For more information on court reports, see Procedure H: Court Involvement, Item # 3.</i>)</p> <p>11. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all teaming activities outlined in this policy actually occur, in addition to those procedures outlined in the Agency's Out-of-Home Practice Model.</p>
	<p>Procedure C: Assessment</p> <p>The family assessment is an integral part of empowering children and families to self-identify strengths and accomplishments as well as needs and concerns. Assessments begin at the time of engagement and rely upon information that is gathered through initial conversations with individuals and extended family members, including other professionals who may have a current, close relationship to the child or youth (e.g., a mentor, coach, teacher, or adult friend). CFSA and its private agency partners recognize that families are diverse and therefore, the social worker is expected to approach each family assessment in a manner that is respectful of culture, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.</p> <p>1. Assessments shall occur as part of the ongoing teaming process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Based on interviews with the family and the family's team members, the social worker shall continually assess for safety, risk, needs, and strengths. b. The results of assessments shall be shared promptly with family members during case-planning discussions.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The social worker is responsible for completing the following activities associated with safety and risk assessments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use of standard child welfare evaluation tools such as the Structured Decision Making (SDM™) assessment process, use of genograms, and family group conferencing. b. Determining safety and risk factors for settings other than the home environment, e.g., the school, neighborhood, and/or homes of other biological family members. c. Responding as soon as possible to the family's immediate concrete needs by providing appropriate remedies, including timely interventions, clothing vouchers, infant crib, and/or assistance with payment of utilities. 3. The social worker shall assess a family's needs throughout the life of the case in order to ensure that any services being provided are also facilitating permanency. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assessment information shall include significant family history. b. The social worker shall also focus on underlying issues while addressing immediate, concrete needs of the family and child. c. All parties who may have relevant information on the child and family (e.g., resource parents, guardian <i>ad litem</i>, service providers, and Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative social workers, if applicable) shall be contacted for additional information during a family assessment. 4. Formal assessments, such as psychological or educational evaluations, shall be provided as needed or determined necessary by the social worker, team, or family. <i>Note: the results of all formal assessments shall be promptly shared (as appropriate) with other team members.</i> 5. Supervisors shall make themselves available to guide, mentor, and assist social workers during all stages of the assessment process.
	<p>Procedure D: Case Planning</p> <p>Similar to family engagement and assessment, case planning is a dynamic process that requires direct family involvement, which is a basic tenet of CFSA's Practice Model. The out-of-home or private agency social worker reinforces this tenet by establishing and maintaining positive rapport with the family, partnering with them to identify and meet their needs, ensuring their safety and well-being, and securing their path to permanency. Effective case planning integrates a family's unique strengths, support networks, coping skills, needs, and psychological stressors into the selection of appropriate services. It is critical that youth, age-appropriate children, and caregivers be consistently involved in case planning.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The social worker shall continually approach and emphasize the case planning process as a cooperative effort among team members.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. During formal case planning meetings, which shall occur every six months or whenever family circumstances or needs change, the following agenda items shall be addressed: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Discussion and updates on assessments and evaluations b. Visitation schedules (see CFSA's Visitation Policy, and <i>Procedure F</i> below), as well as identification of the least restrictive and most normalizing environments for visits c. Educational services, including school enrollment, attendance, academic performance, school stability, and any school-related transportation of the children d. Case plan integration with other District or community-based agencies e. Review of previous goals and objectives f. Effectiveness of interventions g. Creation and/or updating of goals, objectives, task lists, next steps, and time lines h. Review and assignment of team member responsibilities i. Scheduling of future case planning team meetings 3. The following five general activities shall be included in the CFSA case planning process (see also the CFSA Out-of-Home Practice Model): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assessing family needs and strengths to inform case planning. b. Developing comprehensive and timely case plan goals. c. Implementing the case plan in partnership with all members of the family team, including service providers when applicable. d. Frequent tracking and adjusting of the case plan (as necessary) to preserve its integrity. e. Concurrent permanency goal planning. 4. As a matter of policy, CFSA requires that the case planning process integrate five requisite components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Strengths as outlined by the SDM™ tools. b. Specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-sensitive (SMART) steps and objectives that support the family's overarching goals. c. An outline of specific interventions that expedite permanency and address safety and well-being. d. Documented progress towards the successful achievement of previously stated goals (if applicable). e. A visitation schedule for parents and children, siblings, and when applicable, other kin.
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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Case planning shall explore lifelong connections for all children but particularly for older youth. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social workers shall be responsible for ongoing family finding and case mining efforts to expand the pool of potential lifelong connections for children and youth on their caseload. b. Relationships with siblings are considered “lifelong connections”, and should be supported (as appropriate) by the social worker and the case planning team. c. Even when parental rights have been terminated, the capacity of those parents to become life-long connections shall be explored. 6. When case planning for older youth nearing permanency, special considerations shall be undertaken by the social worker to protect the youth’s preparedness for adulthood. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social workers shall ensure transition planning begins at age 15 and is in place for older youth by age 17. b. Older youth shall be encouraged to take responsibility for their case planning progress, and for the achievement of their goals. c. Regardless of the older youth’s permanency goal, special attention shall be made to ensure development of life skills, including but not limited to the items listed under <i>Procedure B: Teaming, Item # 10.a-g</i>. 7. The out-of-home or private agency supervisor shall be responsible for ensuring completion of the following case planning activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Case plans include SMART (<i>see 1.b above</i>) goals, objectives, and steps. b. Completed tools, such as the Youth Transition Plan worksheet, are incorporated into the case planning (<i>see the Agency’s policy on Transition Services for Youth</i>). c. Reunification is the permanency goal (whenever possible). d. All documentation is accurately entered into FACES. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Social workers shall refer to CFSA’s Quick Reference Guide, Elements of Good Documentation. ii. Documentation should include completion of school enrollment packages for every school age child according academic year. e. All current case plans are signed by all case planning team members, especially caregivers and age-appropriate children.
	<p>Procedure E: Placement</p> <p>CFSA’s Placement Services Administration (PSA) is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for placing children in any foster home or congregate care program. Placement specialists ensure that the placements are family-focused and permanency goal-oriented to provide children with the most appropriate care for their individual needs. Whenever possible, the first choice for placement is with kin, keeping siblings together, and also maintaining the child’s connection to the community, including ongoing</p>

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	<p>enrollment in his or her school of origin (<i>see the Agency's policy on Educational Services</i>). CFSA and private agency social workers are obliged to do all in their power to minimize or eliminate any potential for a placement disruption throughout the life of the case. This includes ongoing assessments and when needed, interventions that prevent disruption and ensure the child's safety, stability, well-being, and timely progress to permanency. For more detailed information on the placement process, the social workers should refer to CFSA's Placement and Matching Policy.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Special consideration for minimizing the trauma of removal should be given by all social workers when addressing a child's placement in care. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The social worker shall explain the placement situation in language that is readily understood by the child and family members. b. All CFSA and private agency social workers shall comply with the guidelines set forth in the Agency's Language Access Services Policy, and thereby ensure that any or all family members with LEP are provided with access to appropriate interpretation and/or translation services. 2. The social worker shall be responsible for facilitating a mandatory intake meeting within 72 hours of a child's initial placement (or replacement). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The intake meeting shall occur at the placement site. b. Participants shall include the social worker, age-appropriate child, private agency or provider staff, and resource parent. c. The following agenda items shall be addressed during the meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Placement passport, including medical, mental health, and Medicaid appointments ii. Schooling, vocational training, work schedule, and transportation iii. Anticipated length of time in placement d. It is important to let the child and the resource parent know that a weekly visit from the social worker (or family support worker) will take place for the first month of placement to ensure a safe and healthy transition period, and that twice-monthly visits will occur thereafter. <i>Note: social workers shall work with the resource parent to determine mutually convenient times for visits in the home. For more information, refer to CFSA's Visitation Policy.</i> 3. Social workers are obliged to share child-specific information with the resource providers in order to reinforce the teaming relationship, encourage trust, and streamline permanency (see CFSA's policy on Relationship with Resource Parents). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prior to placement (if possible), the social worker shall provide the resource parent (or provider) with assessment information that details the child's strengths, challenges, medical needs, etc.
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	<p>b. Upon the child's arrival to the resource parent's home, the social worker shall provide the resource parent with the child's Placement Passport packet, including identifying information (e.g., Social Security card) as well as medical information (e.g., Medicaid card, list of known allergies, diagnosed conditions, medications, and/or prescriptions).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CFSA social workers shall ensure that all placement information is provided to the private agencies to enable them to follow through with placement packages for their families. <p>c. All changes in the child's medical, developmental, emotional, or educational needs shall be updated by the social worker or the resource parent (as appropriate) in the Child's Placement Passport packet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social workers shall ensure that resource parents and providers are given specific guidance regarding the information that should be added to the Placement Passport packet during the course of the child's placement in the resource home or facility. <p>4. It is the responsibility of the social worker to develop a comprehensive "well-being" plan to meet the child's needs during placement, including educational, medical, developmental, and emotional needs.</p> <p>a. The social worker shall team with the resource parent to ensure the child maintains contact with friends and continues activities the child enjoyed prior to removal.</p> <p>b. To protect a child's well-being, the plan shall include keeping the child in his or her same school or childcare center whenever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. If changes in school or childcare are necessary, the social worker must document in FACES.net why the change is necessary to serve the child's best interest. ii. The social worker shall also coordinate with school officials and the resource parent to ensure the child's needs are met. iii. The social worker shall be responsible for arranging and/or facilitating transportation to a child's school or childcare center. <p>5. Changes in placement should be avoided except when the change is determined to be clinically warranted to protect the child's safety and well-being or is purposeful to reunification or achievement of a permanency goal.</p> <p>a. The social worker and the resource parent shall communicate regularly, remaining alert to both subtle and blatant signs that a placement's stability is in jeopardy.</p> <p>b. If any such signs appear, the social worker and resource parent or congregate care staff shall make proactive efforts to resolve issues as expeditiously as possible to avoid placement disruption and possible re-traumatization of a child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The social worker shall facilitate timely provision of supportive services to maintain the placement, such as child care or other identified service areas.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. Resolution shall include teaming with the child, the resource parents, and other vested individuals (as appropriate). iii. If a potential disruption is directly related to relationships between CFSA or the private agency and the resource parent, the assigned social worker shall make all efforts to resolve those issues to prevent the disruption. Interventions may include a facilitated meeting by the CFSA Ombudsman, the resource parent's support worker, or other neutral parties. iv. Clinical justification and supervisory approval must be documented prior to disrupting a placement against the wishes of a resource parent. <i>Note: Social workers shall ensure that resource parents are aware of their right to appeal an Agency decision regarding placement. See CFSA's Quick Reference Guide Fair Hearings Appeal Process for Foster Home Placement Changes.</i> <p>6. It is the expectation of the CFSA that a child shall only be discharged from a placement when the permanency goal has been achieved or there is a need for a level of care that is more or less restrictive and cannot be provided by the current resource provider. If a change in placement is necessary, the change should be planned whenever possible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Prior to a replacement request to the Placement Services Administration, the social worker shall facilitate a team meeting to address efforts for stabilizing the placement, including use of community-based interventions, child-focused meetings (including FTMs, see the Family Team Meeting Policy), and behavioral contracts, if necessary. b. If stabilization efforts are unsuccessful, the social worker shall expeditiously schedule a team meeting focused specifically on the replacement to ensure as smooth a transition as possible. c. Participants at both meetings shall include (at a minimum) the age-appropriate child, the social worker, the placement specialist, the birth parent(s) and their attorneys (if appropriate), the GAL, as well as the current and prospective resource parent or congregate care provider. d. The child's team shall approve all proposed placement adjustments. <i>Note: all placements, including private agency placements, must go through CFSA's Placement Services Administration.</i> e. When applicable, the assigned social worker shall enter the placement change request in FACES.net and complete the replacement form. <i>All replacement forms must be signed by the program administrator or the Agency Director.</i> f. Notice of placement changes must be given both orally and in writing to the following people: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. At least 10 calendar days prior to the replacement (except in an emergency which requires notification within 24 hours): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Placement Services Administrator
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) AAG (<i>Note: if the placement change is an emergency, the social worker shall consult with the AAG to determine whether an emergency hearing or interim report is required. For more information on interim reports, see Procedure H: Court Involvement, Item # 2</i>) c) Birth parents and their attorneys (if applicable) d) Resource parents e) GAL f) Providers <p>ii. Within 30 calendar days of the replacement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) All adult relatives, including grandparents (see CFSA's <u>Diligent Search Policy</u>) b) Significant non-relatives <p>7. If a placement change becomes necessary as the result of a change in permanency goal (e.g., from reunification to adoption or guardianship), a consultation shall occur between the social worker, the child's team (including the current resource parent), and the Placement Services Administration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If the social worker has not done so already, he or she shall renew family finding and diligent search efforts to locate possible relatives who might be willing and able to provide a permanent, safe, and loving placement that can address the child's needs. b. If the social worker has not done so already, he or she shall consult with the current resource parent to assess their interest in becoming a permanency option through adoption or guardianship. c. The following circumstances <i>might</i> sometimes give Agency support to the request of a youth at least 18 years old to pursue legal action to close the youth's case, terminate governmental jurisdiction, and thus allow the youth to exit the child welfare system: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The team determines that the youth is mature and responsible enough to obtain his or her own stability and it is clinically determined by the social worker (in consultation with the team) that it is in the best interests of the youth to do so. ii. The team has developed an individual transitional independent living plan (ITILP) that includes an established life-long connection with an individual who will assist the youth to obtain his or her self-sustaining independence. <i>Note: the youth must have an established life-long connection before the Agency will approve actions to terminate CFSA's legal and moral obligation to the youth.</i> iii. The youth is employed or has some stable and identifiable form of income, and the youth has identified an apartment or other suitable, legitimate, safe, and affordable housing.
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	<p>8. The supervisor shall ensure the safety and support the stability of a child's placement through the following activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the social worker and providing feedback on whether or not s/he has successfully achieved the following five basic objectives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Notification of all team members (e.g., providers, AAGs, and GALs) of initial placements or placement changes. Identifying relatives who are suitable for kinship placement. Maximizing team support. Making note of observations during home visits to anticipate and intervene in a possible disruption to a placement. Documenting progress towards timely permanence, including ways to reduce the expected duration of out-of-home placement. Helping to resolve any challenges the team has encountered while making final decisions regarding placement. Setting clear expectations, boundaries, and responsibilities for family support workers who must complement the activities of the social workers. Reinforcing the teaming partnership between the social worker and the resource parent, particularly expectations regarding their individual roles and responsibilities.
	<p>Procedure F: Visitation</p> <p>In addition to being a federally-mandated practice standard, visitation is an effective vehicle for maintaining authentic communication between family members and CFSA and resource parents. Visitation further helps to prevent placement disruptions, secures a child's well-being and safety, and expedites the path to permanency. It also maintains the integrity of the teaming process. <i>Note: visitation is a right, not a privilege. It should never be used to cajole or threaten or manipulate a child's behavior. Social workers shall refer to CFSA's Visitation Policy for further details regarding the different types of visitations, i.e., between social worker and birth parents, between child and siblings or parents, etc.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> As noted in <i>Procedure E: Placement</i>, # 2.d above, the social worker shall make weekly visits to children in out-of-home care for the first four weeks in placement, with a minimum of one visit every two weeks thereafter. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The social worker shall consider the child's progress, safety, and overall well-being throughout any visitation. The social worker shall also observe the physical environment of the resource home for basic supports, e.g., healthy food, utilities in good working order, etc. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Any potential physical hazards should be discussed immediately with the resource parent and remedied as soon as possible.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii. If hazards cannot be easily remedied, or do not appear to comply with licensing regulations, the social worker may need to consult with the assigned licensing specialist. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The social worker shall make every effort to achieve the following objectives when visiting with older youth in care: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reinforcing case plan objectives for mastering life skills. b. Discussing ways to overcome any identified barriers to achieving the youth's goals and objectives. c. Assisting youth through any lingering feelings of loss or grief. d. Soliciting the youth's perception of any services, i.e., quality, effectiveness, and/or usefulness, and responding accordingly to ensure that services meet the youth's needs. e. Ensuring that the youth's transition plans are in place (see Transition Services for Youth policy). 3. Visits between the social worker and the birth parent(s) shall be scheduled regularly in support of the case plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. If reunification is the permanency goal, the social worker shall address parental readiness throughout each visitation. b. The social worker shall clearly communicate in plain English what steps the Agency expects the parent to complete before the Agency will support reunification. Any questions asked by the parent regarding the Agency's expectations should be thoroughly answered to avoid any confusion. c. If the parent has concerns or is not satisfied with any services, the social worker shall make every effort to facilitate the parent's access to quality services to meet that particular parent's needs. d. The social worker shall complete the following SDM™ risk and safety assessment tasks during every visit with a birth parent: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Assess the interactions and family dynamics between the parent and any child living in the home. ii. Observe the physical environment for basic supports, e.g., proper food, working utilities, etc. iii. Address any immediate hazards as soon as possible, and develop a safety plan that will either prevent or diminish future hazards. iv. Discuss any needs of the children in the home and facilitate access to services as necessary. v. Coach the parent in how to provide structure for the home life, e.g., consistent bed times, eating meals together at the table, and assigning age-appropriate chores (either daily or weekly).
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	<p>4. Children in care shall have frequent and regularly scheduled visits with their parents, siblings, and other kin unless there is a clinical determination that such visitation is not in their best interests and/or there are court orders that prevent it.</p> <p>a. The out-of-home or private agency social worker shall team with the resource parent to ensure that visitation schedules, as well as transportation plans related to visitation, coincide with time frames that are mutually convenient for the resource household as well as the visitation participants.</p> <p>b. Children shall visit with their parents within the first week of placement. <i>Note: If this does not occur, the social worker must document the reason and justification in FACES.net.</i></p> <p>c. Social workers shall make every effort to arrange multiple visits each week in all cases, particularly to facilitate reunification and especially for those cases involving a child under 10 years old, or a child who needs more frequent visits to maintain his or her well-being. <i>At a minimum, children shall visit with their parents once a week when reunification is the permanency goal.</i></p> <p>i. Although CFSA recognizes that multiple visits at various locations with different family members intrinsically creates scheduling and work load burdens for the social worker, there is yet still an expectation that social workers prioritize to ensure that visits and locations are child-focused and family-strengthening.</p> <p>ii. Whenever possible, children with a permanency goal of reunification shall visit with their parents at the family home.</p> <p>iii. If visits at the family home are not possible, the visits shall occur in the most family-like setting possible, such as another family member's home or at a familiar place within the family's community, e.g., a favorite restaurant, the local community center, or the family's place of worship (if applicable).</p> <p>iv. <i>Reasons for visits occurring at CFSA or at a private agency versus a family-friendly location shall be documented in FACES.net.</i></p> <p>d. The social worker shall make every possible effort to provide quality, positive, even memorable visitations between children and their parents and siblings.</p> <p>e. When not prevented by a court order, the social worker shall make arrangements for children to visit with incarcerated parents (see CFSA's policy, Engaging Incarcerated Parents).</p> <p>i. The social worker shall work directly with correctional authorities to adhere to that facility's policies for family visitation.</p> <p>ii. In the event that a parent is incarcerated out of state, the social worker shall make every attempt to facilitate communication through telephone or email, as appropriate.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d. Quality visits between a child and his or her siblings shall be scheduled at a minimum of twice a month. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Resource parents shall be guided to coordinate sibling visits. ii. If visits are not practical, the resource parent shall encourage frequent sibling contact, including telephone calls and email, or postal mail. <p>5. Although unsupervised visits should be the norm, at times visits between children and family members may require supervision by the social worker or family support worker due to a court order or based on the circumstances of an individual case.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The social worker shall enter the reason(s) for the supervised visit in FACES.net. b. Social workers shall keep any intervention during a supervised visit to a minimum although the supervising staff member may facilitate conversation (as appropriate) to encourage healthy and positive interactions and/or to promote a relaxed and comfortable environment. c. If appropriate, the social worker shall consult with his or her supervisor to discuss alternatives to having CFSA or private agency social workers supervise visits, e.g., supervision by a foster parent or extended family member. <p>6. When helping family members to prepare for unsupervised visits, the social worker shall (as appropriate) help the child, siblings, and/or parents to establish goals for making the visit enjoyable and memorable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In advance of the visit, the social worker shall schedule individual “pre-meetings” to help the child, sibling, and/or parent address any issues or concerns. b. Whenever possible, the social worker shall assist the family with reasonable access to material resources that will help ensure a positive and safe visitation experience. c. After the visit, it is important that the social worker communicate with family members individually and also assess the overall outcome of the visit, addressing any issues or concerns that may have arisen and/or that may help for planning future unsupervised visits. <p>7. All visitations must be accurately documented in FACES.net within 24 hours (or the next business day) from the moment the social worker is aware of the visitation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Documentation shall include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Date and location of the visit ii. Persons present iii. Purpose
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. If the social worker is present for the visitation, he or she shall also document observations related to safety and risk as well as details of interactions with family members, caregivers, resource parents, etc. c. If visitations do not occur in accordance with the case plan, the social worker shall ensure that the reasons are fully justified and documented. <p>8. Supervisors shall support the visitation process through the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assist the social worker with setting objectives for all types of visitation. b. Offer guidance and strategies for the social worker to engage mothers and fathers and/or other maternal and paternal relatives. c. Coach and role model strength-based, constructive feedback techniques for any issues related to the visit's participants. d. Help the social worker strengthen his or her observation skills by seeking information that might influence a child's visitation experience either at the parent's or the resource home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Individuals who may be in or out of the home during visitation ii. Any paramours who may be interacting with the child iii. Types of questions asked of the participants by the social worker, and types of responses received iv. Patterns of behavior that may be of concern v. Negative cycles that may need to be addressed e. After visits, debrief with the social worker. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Address any barriers that may have arisen with regard to attaining the objectives set prior to the visitation. ii. Coach the worker in strength-based strategies for attaining future objectives.
	<p>Procedure G: Permanency</p> <p>Placing a child in out-of-home care for protection is always considered a temporary solution until measures can be taken to provide timely and stable permanency. Such measures include making every effort to assist the birth parents in overcoming difficulties, strengthening ties between the parent and child, and achieving reunification whenever appropriate. If safe reunification cannot be accomplished or is impossible for some other reason, CFSA shall always concurrently plan for adoption or permanent guardianship (preferably by kin, see CFSA's Permanency Planning Policy). If those options are completely exhausted, the Agency shall pursue legal custody or a youth may be eligible under certain circumstances for the goal of an alternative planned permanency living arrangement (APPLA).</p>

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Permanency planning shall be considered a team effort, including the child (when age appropriate), the resource parents, biological parents, and other supportive adults who may or may not be professionally involved with the child. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Even if a “termination of parental rights” (TPR) motion has been finalized, biological parents may sometimes be involved in the permanency planning. The social worker shall use his or her discretion based on a clinical assessment of the relationships involved. <i>Note: by federal mandate, CFSA must file a TPR petition for any child who has been in foster care for 15 out of the most recent 22 months, unless the child is living with a kinship caregiver with a permanency goal other than adoption, or the Agency has not provided reasonable efforts to reunify the family and the team can document a compelling reason (based on clinical assessments) not to file a TPR petition. Compelling reasons may include but are not limited to a child with an ongoing strong connection to a parent, or a child living with a non-kin caregiver who is likely to seek guardianship or custody.</i> b. CFSA permanency specialists shall be included in all permanency planning meetings. c. All permanency team discussions shall address the Agency’s expectations, time frames regarding permanence, and any potential repercussions of the permanency goal for the biological and/or resource parents. <i>Note: per District law, a prospective adoptive parent may enter into a post-adoption contact (PAC) agreement with the birth parent to allow for contact between the biological family and the adoptee (provided the adoptee is 14 years of age or older). The social worker shall consult with his or her supervisor or the Office of General Counsel if there are any questions or concerns regarding procedures surrounding a potential PAC agreement.</i> 2. Reunification is always the primary permanency goal for a child unless there is a court order stating otherwise. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. To prepare for reunification, the relationship between the child and the parent shall be protected and reinforced through visitation (see <i>Procedure F: Visitation, above</i>). b. Per the case plan, the social worker shall provide concrete assistance and support to the birth parent for accessing services, including submission of timely referrals. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. The social worker shall directly assist the birth parent to identify training resources that can provide specialized training for the parent to address the individual and/or specialized needs of their child (ren). ii. The social worker shall maintain regular communication with the service providers to increase the potential for a successful reunification outcome. iii. In preparation for reunification, the social worker shall also facilitate and/or make arrangements for access to post-permanency services upon the child’s return.
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	<p>3. In the event that reunification is not possible, the social worker shall continue seeking other potential permanent caregivers throughout the life of the case.</p> <p>a. Potential permanent caregivers should be identified during the Family Team Meeting (FTM).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Immediate and/or extended family members shall be considered as the first potential <i>permanent</i> caregivers if such placement fulfills the case plan goals for permanency. ii. In order to reduce re-traumatizing the child through additional placement disruptions, the second viable permanency option shall be the current resource parent, <i>if the foster home placement is a good match</i>, and the child's team members are in agreement. iii. The child's team should remain open to the possibility that prospective caregivers may be completely outside of the family circle, e.g., a child's coach, tutor, nurse, etc. iv. Prospective permanent caregivers shall be invited to attend all scheduled team meetings. v. The child's core team shall welcome and support the prospective permanent caregiver with the understanding that each caregiver will need individual guidance and preparation for handling the transition to permanency, e.g., a resource parent who decides to adopt will need different preparation than a family outside of the system. vi. The team shall assess all prospective caregivers, including their capabilities and willingness to fulfill the long-term commitment necessary to achieve successful permanency. <p>b. The social worker shall promptly and regularly provide prospective permanent caregivers with the following information to prepare and guide them towards a successful permanency outcome for the child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. A clear, realistic description of the child's needs, strengths, and challenges, including what to expect as the child continues to mature and develop. ii. Availability of financial assistance, e.g., subsidy and post-permanency services, should be discussed whenever applicable in a transparent and forthcoming manner in order for families to have available the best information possible for making a good permanency decision. iii. Access to specific services and supports to handle issues related to grief, loss, abandonment, and possible behavioral issues that may surface even after the caregiver and child have become a permanent, stable, loving, and nurturing family unit. iv. Accurate descriptions of all possible legal routes to permanency, including custody, guardianship (both for kinship and non-kinship caregivers), and adoption with or without a PAC agreement.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. If applicable, the social worker shall meet with the age-appropriate child and the prospective permanent caregiver to discuss ways they can address challenges that will undoubtedly accompany the transition to permanency. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The social worker shall prepare the age-appropriate child for permanency by completing the following action steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Actively soliciting input from the child regarding the child's preference for permanence. b. Include the child in the teaming and permanency planning process. c. Discuss permanency options with the child. d. Encourage the child to express any feelings of grief, loss, abandonment, etc. e. Provide therapeutic resources as necessary. 5. Every social worker shall be prepared to encounter and handle circumstances where resource parents, who are potentially permanent caregivers, may feel a need for on-going support, either financial or through service provision, beyond that which is available after permanency. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It is the responsibility of the social worker to eliminate as many impediments to permanency as possible. b. The social worker shall work with potential permanency caregivers to resolve barriers, including access to the following post-permanency services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Services accessible through the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaboratives ii. Services that can be negotiated as part of the subsidy agreement. iii. Support from the Post-Permanency Family Center (or its successor). <i>For more information on the Post-Permanency Family Center (PPFC), refer to www.adoptionstogether.org.</i> iv. Free or Medicaid-funded medical and mental health services v. Possible availability of CFSA-sponsored college funding and/or other higher education financial supports, including federal financial aid (e.g., Free Application for Federal Student Aid) or the D.C. Adoption Scholarship fund for post-secondary education (limited to children adopted on or after October 1, 2001 or children who lost one or both parents as a result of the events of September 11, 2001). 6. The following activities shall play an integral part of the supervisor's efforts to support permanency: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Helping social workers understand family history and exploring therapeutic issues during permanency planning. b. Brainstorming with social workers to search for creative permanency options when none are apparent.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Assisting social workers to filter through their personal biases in order to objectively assess a family's potential ability to serve as a viable permanency option. d. Reinforcing the importance of each team member's opinions, insights, and recommendations for achieving permanency.
	<p>Procedure H: Court Involvement</p> <p>The Family Court's involvement in a child welfare case begins once CFSA papers the case* (i.e., petitions the Family Court) to enforce CFSA's legal right to protect a child who is alleged to have been abused or neglected. Ultimately, the Family Court judge will make any final decisions regarding the child's case plan and permanency goal. It is extremely important that the child's team, represented by the assigned out-of-home social worker and the Assistant Attorney General (AAG), be thorough in developing recommendations. The AAG will present the team's case plan recommendations to the Court throughout the life of the case. <i>*For more details on papering a case, please see CFSA's online Investigations Practice Operational Manual (IPOM), Section 5, "CPS and the Law".</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From case assignment to safe case closure, it is imperative that the social worker be prepared for every level of court involvement. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Social worker preparation includes but is not limited to the following basics: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Knowledge of case facts and family details ii. Familiarity with legal definitions of neglect and abuse (See Section 5 of the IPOM referenced above, as well as the CFSA Investigations Policy.) iii. Knowledge of child welfare-specific legal terminology (e.g., <i>in loco parentis</i>, guardian <i>ad litem</i>, etc.) iv. Thorough understanding of different types of court hearings, e.g., probable cause, permanency hearing, TPR, etc. v. Consultation with the AAG to ensure clear and concise testimony regarding the social worker's involvement with the case vi. Well-written court documents, filed prior to the deadlines established by statute and court rule vii. Documented timely delivery of important services for clients (to avoid services being court-ordered) viii. Proper attire and a well-groomed appearance ix. Confident, articulate, and professional behavior b. Although CFSA's Office of Planning, Policy, and Program Support sends postal notification of certain court hearings to resource parents, the social worker is also required (in keeping with best practices) to ensure that verbal or written notification of all court hearings is provided to interested parties, e.g., the age-appropriate child, his or her biological parents and their attorneys (if applicable), the resource parents, guardian, and GAL. <i>Note: although GALs and birth parent attorneys are expected to participate in court hearings without prompting by CFSA, social workers shall consider notification part of a standard of practice.</i>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. It is the responsibility of the social worker to encourage court attendance by team members, including biological and resource parents, extended family members, age-appropriate children, etc., and to ensure their thorough preparation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Social workers shall provide team members (as appropriate) with a rudimentary understanding of general court processes, including arrival times, when and how to address the judge, appropriate attire, etc. ii. Although the judge will make all final decisions, team members need to understand that preparation is vital to ensuring that <i>the team is driving the case and the permanency goal</i>. <p>2. During a court hearing, both the social worker and the assigned AAG may speak on behalf of the Agency but <i>it is the responsibility of the AAG to legally represent the Agency</i>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The attorney-client relationship between the AAG and CFSA shall apply to CFSA-contracted private agencies. b. During court hearings, recommendations of the social worker (as a representative of the Agency) shall be consistent with CFSA's mission, Practice Model, and policies. <p>3. The social worker shall ensure that all drafted court reports are comprehensive and submitted to the AAG at least three business days in advance of the filing date.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Court reports shall include the following information as appropriate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. All elements required by statute or by rule of the Family Court ii. Engagement and/or assessment updates related to the following individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Children and youth b) Biological parents c) Resource parents d) Service providers e) School officials or staff (teachers, nurses, counselors) f) Other family members iii. Notations and details on any unresolved issues related to services and/or court orders iv. Summary of most recent steps taken to fulfill case plan goals and objectives, including successful accomplishments of goals by individual family members v. Description of reasonable efforts to achieve permanency goals b. The AAG shall review the court reports to ensure that all pending issues are appropriately addressed and that the permanency plan is accurately detailed, including progress towards achieving the permanency goal as recommended by the team.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. The social worker shall consult with the AAG under the following circumstances with regard to filing interim court reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Placement change ii. Abscondence (running away) iii. Arrest of youth or caregiver iv. New allegation of neglect or abuse v. Other important events (e.g., death of a caregiver) <p>4. It is the responsibility of the social worker to ensure that court orders are followed and/or implemented by the appropriate team member(s).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. It is crucial that the all court orders are fulfilled to protect the integrity of the child's case plan and permanency goals. b. If the social worker has difficulty ensuring implementation of a court order, s/he shall seek the assistance of his or her supervisor, and immediately consult with the AAG. c. If the social worker wants or needs to modify a court order, s/he should contact the AAG who will determine whether or not it is appropriate for the Agency to request modification, or additional time to fulfill the order, or request to vacate the order.
	<p>Procedure I: Supervision</p> <p>Supervisors and program managers play a pivotal role in the professional development of front-line staff and in the quality of service that front-line staff members provide to children and families on the caseload. It is imperative that supervision be a strength-based, teaming process that ensures all social workers are receiving clinical feedback and helpful strategies for engaging families. Supervision is also a propitious opportunity for role modeling behavior, advancing the tenets of the Agency's Practice Model, and reinforcing the knowledge base and skill sets provided to social workers during pre- and in-service training. The supervisory structure, and its associated activities and goals, are paralleled by the program manager when supervising the supervisor.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All supervisors shall schedule the supervision of their direct reports with the intent to produce the following positive outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Clarity of a social worker's roles and responsibilities. b. Development of social worker skills and professional growth. c. Increased competency in the social worker's ability to engage, assess, and implement a strength-based, family-centered approach to case work, particularly as a reflection of the Agency's Practice Model and quality improvement. d. Reinforcement of the importance of accurate and timely data entry into FACES (including updated demographic information). e. Recognition that the Structured Decision Making tools (i.e., risk and safety assessments), the Family Team Meetings (FTM), and the Family Group Conferences (FGC) are essential processes for making informed decisions regarding out-of-home case planning and safe case closure.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. CFSA supervisors shall ensure the following tasks are completed within seven (7) days of a new or transferred out-of-home case assignment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Initiation and scheduling of the first joint staffing with the appropriate staff members. b. Preparation and submission of an agenda to all participants at least 24 hours (or one business day) in advance of the initial staffing. 3. Supervisors shall hold themselves accountable for completion of the following tasks specific to the supervision of ongoing cases. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Scheduling weekly supervision (at least 1 hour per session) for each individual social worker in the unit, and ensuring availability outside of supervision as needed. <i>Note: the weekly supervisions shall be documented in FACES.net within 24 hours.</i> b. Preparing the agenda or requiring staff to bring an agenda that includes the number of cases to be reviewed during the scheduled supervision. c. Holding in-depth discussions on each case plan. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Providing clinical feedback. ii. Ensuring the case plan is appropriate and that family needs are being met. iii. Ensuring that appropriate management support and resources are provided to support each family's goals. iv. Helping to identify cases where momentum or family engagement is problematic. v. Assisting social workers to use solution-focused and strength-based approaches for engaging and working with the family. d. Ensuring that social workers are assessing for safety at each visit. e. Documenting each case consultation in FACES.net. f. Scheduling unit meetings to assist with problem-solving (as needed). i. Reinforcing the application of training to the actual child welfare practice. 4. Out-of-home supervisors must ensure that their assigned social workers accomplish the following case-carrying tasks: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Accurate and timely updating of information in FACES.net. b. Proactive teaming with families and with whomever the family deems as an integral part of the team. c. Working closely with community providers and all members of the family to identify both the family and the community resources necessary for setting and achieving family goals. d. Acting as facilitators between multiple community providers and the family's support network. e. Incorporating collaborative processes in case practice, such as clinical staffings, FTMs, and FGCs.
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ATTACHMENT A: DEFINITIONS

Adoption: A final decree of adoption establishes the relationship of natural parent and natural child between adopter and adoptee for all purposes, including mutual rights of inheritance and succession as if adoptee were born to adopter. The court terminates the legal rights of the biological parents and substitutes those rights toward adoptive parents who may be kin or non-kin. A financial subsidy may sometimes but not necessarily be involved in the adoption agreement.

Assessment: The process of gathering information about the family from a number of difference sources to develop a clear sense of major issues facing the family. The family is always involved in the assessment process. Assessment continues in tandem with services to ensure that children and youth are safe throughout the life of the case, and to help identify resources that will support a child's permanency goal. A risk assessment determines the likelihood of future maltreatment, and a safety assessment evaluates present danger along with any interventions necessary to protect the child or youth. Assessments are particularly necessary for the out-of-home social worker to gain a deeper understanding of family dynamics, the family's current and past circumstances, underlying issues, strengths, and concerns. In a teaming partnership with the child's team, assessments ultimately guide the selection of appropriate and quality services that are tailored to help the family overcome challenges, and reinforce existing strengths.

Case Planning: This is a cooperative effort in which the out-of-home social worker assesses the family's needs in partnership with the family and other team members. This effort becomes the foundation on which a program of interventions is built to sufficiently address any necessary behavioral changes for permanency to be achieved. In the District of Columbia, case planning for one permanency goal is complemented by a concurrent plan for a secondary goal in the event that the first goal, for whatever reason, is not achieved.

Custodian: A person or agency (other than a parent or legal guardian) who has been granted legal custody of a child by order of a court and who is acting in loco parentis, or who is a daycare provider or who provides care in a residential facility for a child who has been abused or neglected.

Family Court: The Family Court Operations Division of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

Engagement: The process of building a collaborative working relationship between the family and the out-of-home social worker for the purpose of achieving one of the following permanency goals: reunification, adoption, legal custody or guardianship. Engagement is based on honesty, empathy, mutual respect, unconditional positive regard, respect for diversity, a collaborative service-planning and decision-making process, and a strength-based approach to overcoming barriers to permanency.

Fictive Kin: Individuals who have an emotionally significant relationship with an individual but are not related by birth or by marriage.

Guardian Ad Litem (GAL): An attorney appointed by the Family Court to represent the child's best interests in proceedings. This person may perform a variety of roles, including that of investigator, advocate and/or advisor.

Guardianship: The relationship conferred by a court order that enumerates the rights and responsibilities of an appointed guardian concerning the care, custody, and control of the child. The guardian has the duty and authority to make important decisions in matters having a permanent

effect on the life and development of the minor and his general welfare. The entry of a guardianship order does not terminate the parent-child relationship. A financial subsidy may be involved.

In Loco Parentis: Literally, “in the place of the parent.” It is a legal relationship of a temporary nature in which an individual intentionally assumes the responsibilities of a parent to another.

Legal Custody: The legal status created by the Family Court which vests in an adult custodial rights and responsibilities of a minor. There is no financial subsidy involved.

Permanency: As defined by the federal Child and Family Service Reviews, a child in foster care is determined to have achieved permanency when any of the following occurs: (1) the child has been discharged from foster to reunify with his or her family, either a parent or other relative; (2) the child is discharged to a legally finalized adoption; the child is discharged to a legal guardian. CFSA includes legal custody as a fourth permanency option. Legal custody gives an individual or entity the legal right to make decisions about the child’s welfare, including where they live, enrollment in schools, etc.

Placement: Out-of-home care for children or youth in a licensed kinship or foster home, or a licensed congregate care program that meets the specific needs of the child (e.g., traditional group home for older youth, or if necessary, a residential treatment center to address medical or emotional needs). As a basic CFSA philosophical premise, placement is considered a temporary or short-term intervention during which social workers diligently team with the family to address barriers to reunification or to the three other main permanency options (adoption, guardianship, legal custody). Whenever possible, placement decisions consider a child’s established relationships with biological or fictive kin who may be willing and able to serve as caregivers. Most importantly, placement decisions are carefully tailored to the child’s current functioning and behaviors; medical, educational, and developmental needs; past experiences; religion and culture; connection with the community; school; hobbies; and extracurricular interests.

Principles of Teaming: 1) a team reflects and demonstrates a shared and/or collective vision, 2) a team promotes empowerment of all members, 3) a team demonstrates shared decision making, 4) a team demonstrates synergy – the whole is more than the sum of the parts, 5) a team highly regards diversity as a necessary part of creativity and collaboration, 6) a team fosters the full inclusion and participation of people impacted by its actions, 7) a team facilitates the self-determination and personal growth of itself and its individual members, 8) a team is responsive to its authentic (ecological) context, 9) a team reflects and demonstrates a dynamic and fluid quality - from Stodden, R. A., Brown, S. E., Galloway, L. M., Mrazek, S., & Noy, L. (2004). *Essential tools: Interagency transition team development and facilitation*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, National Center on Secondary Education and Transition.

Reunification: The child returns to the care and custody of his or her parent or the primary caregiver from whom s/he was removed, or returned to a previously non-custodial parent, and the case is no longer open in court. There are cases where the child is reunified with the family under protective supervision by a court order in which case monitoring continues for a defined period while the child remains in the home.

Supervision: A rational, interactive process that provides a social worker with feedback, coaching, guidance, and support they need to fulfill their professional duties to protect children and families, and to ensure safety, well-being, and permanency.

Teaming: The foundation of the District’s child welfare case practice and the core component used in the efforts to address child abuse and neglect - through teaming, social workers, family, and other team members gain the opportunity to collaborate in planning and decision-making. When team members share ownership in facing issues, they also share more informed and creative approaches

to resolving them. As participants take responsibility for contributing to the team's outcomes, more effective and functional cooperation emerges in working toward safety, permanence, and well-being for the child or youth. At its best, teaming embraces family inclusion, supports expert guidance, and respects diversity of views and cultures. A central principle of effective teaming is inclusion of the child or youth and family.

Termination of Parental Rights (TPR): The legal determination that a child is free from the custody and control of either or both of his or her living parents, by means of a court order that completely severs and extinguishes the parent and child relationship, including rights of inheritance.

Visitation: Regularly scheduled face-to-face contact between a child and his or her social worker, both maternal and paternal parents, siblings, other caregivers and/or extended family members. Visitations also include contact between the social worker and family members, resource parents, etc. Visitation is a crucial component of a child's safety and well-being while he or she is in care, and can expedite the child's path to permanency.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



ATTACHMENT B: RECEIPT OF PASSPORT PACKET

Date: _____

Child Name: _____

Delivered By: _____
Print Name Title Signature

Received By: _____
Print Name Signature

This form is to acknowledge that when the above named child was placed, A Passport Packet was also provided containing all available information.

Comments: _____

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Child and Family Services Agency



PASSPORT PACKET

**THE INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS FOLDER
IS CONFIDENTIAL. ONLY THOSE AUTHORIZED BY THE CHILD
AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY OF THE DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA MAY HAVE ACCESS TO THIS INFORMATION.**

**IF YOU ARE NOT AN AUTHORIZED PERSON, PLEASE RETURN
THIS FOLDER TO:**

**THE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES AGENCY
400 6TH ST. SW
WASHINGTON, DC 20024**

INTRODUCTION

This Information Packet is designed to be an interactive set of documents to be regularly used and reviewed by social workers, resource providers and foster home monitors. The goal is to enhance the communication among those charged with the responsibility of providing quality, comprehensive care to a child who is a ward of the District of Columbia.

This set of documents represents the “passport” for a child moving through the system of care. This Passport should be in the possession of the person charged with the child’s care. These documents are confidential and should be treated in a manner that will maintain the privacy of the child.

Different persons involved in the child’s life will have different responsibilities for completing and maintaining this information. These individual responsibilities are outlined in the following pages.

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 - E. Medical Reports
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- VI. History
- VII. Noted Concerns
- VIII. Resources

CPS Social Worker

The following elements should be completed in the Passport Packet by the investigating social worker:

1. Photo of the child with a written physical description on the back;
2. Child Summary
3. Medical Screening Form; and
4. Clothing Voucher

This information should be placed in the Passport Packet and given to the resource provider when the child is placed. The investigating social worker is responsible for completing the Placement Information in FACES within 48 hours or by the time the FTM occurs and the case is transferred. The completed Placement Form should be added to the Passport Packet on the initial home visit which should occur within seven (7) days of the case transfer.

When the child is placed, the assigned resource provider should complete the "Receipt" acknowledging that the Passport Packet was received when the child was placed. The person who placed the child is responsible for returning the "Receipt" to the Agency and placing it in a designated point of collection.

Ongoing Social Worker

The ongoing social worker assigned to the child will be responsible for providing the following information to the resource provider to be included in the Passport Packet:

1. Placement Form (can be printed from FACES);
2. Copy of birth certificate;
3. Copy of social security card;
4. Copy of immunization history;
5. Medicaid card;
6. Copy of court orders;
7. Visitation plan;
8. Copy of Individual Education Plan (IEP)
9. Copy of medical reports; and
10. Daycare/camp information.

These documents should be added to, and updated, during each monthly visit with the resource provider. The Social Worker and the resource provider should jointly complete a notation in the “History” section noting milestones or events that have occurred since the last visit to the home. The Social Worker should also review any notations made by the resource provider in the “Noted Concerns” section. This is an interactive set of documents which should be reviewed during every home visit with the resource provider. As information becomes available to the social worker, copies should be made and included in the Placement Packet.

When there is a change in placement, the Passport Packet should accompany the child. For each placement, a new Child Summary should be completed with updated information regarding the prior placement. In addition, a signed “Receipt” should be completed at the placement and returned to the Agency and submitted to the designated point of collection for each particular Administration.

Resource Provider

Resource providers are responsible for the following components of the Passport Packet:

1. Report cards;
2. Overnight forms;
3. History (completed with social worker); and
4. Noted concerns

The resource provider should add materials to the Passport Packet as they become available from the child's school, medical provider, etc. The "History" section should be completed with the social worker at the monthly home visit with the resource provider. Developmental milestones and special events or achievements should be noted in this section as well.

The "Noted Concerns" section provides a place for the resource provider to note concerns to be addressed with the social worker. These include non-emergency types of observations or behaviors which may emerge as a concern but not require immediate attention. It would also be helpful to include interventions which appeared to be helpful for the child.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

<u>Document</u>	<u>Date Placed In Packet</u>
Photo of Child	_____
Physical Description	(Written on Back)
Child Summary	_____
Placement Form	_____
Clothing Voucher	_____
Birth Certificate	_____
Social Security Card	_____
Visitation Plan	_____
Other	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

II. COURT DOCUMENTS

Assigned GAL
(Tel. #)

DC Judge

Court Orders

Document

Date Placed In Packet

III. EDUCATION

School _____
Grade _____
Educational Advocate _____
(Tel. #) _____

Document

Date Placed In Packet

IEP _____

Report Card _____

Other _____

IV. MEDICAL

Medical Provider

Contact #

Mental Health Provider

Document

Date Placed In Packet

Immunization Record

Medicaid Card

Screening Form

Medical Report

V. ACTIVITIES

Document

Date Placed In Packet

Overnight Permission

Day Care

Camps

Other

VI. HISTORY

This section is to be completed by the resource provider and social worker during the home visit. Please note developmental milestones and significant events in the child's life so the child can maintain a history of his/her development.

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VII. NOTED CONCERNS

This section is to be completed by the resource provider. Please note any behavioral concerns or developmental concerns as well as any interventions and parenting tips that have been observed to be effective with this child. These are issues which are to be discussed with the social worker, but may not merit a telephone call to the social worker at the time of occurrence.

DRAFT

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DRAFT